CHRISTIAN NEWS FROM ISRAEL

HOLBROOK LIBRARY
PACIFIC SCHOOL
OF RELIGION

Issued by the Department for Christian Communities,
Ministry of Religious Affairs.

No. 8 JERUSALEM July—Aug. 1950

This Bulletin provides information on the Christian Communities in Israel. It contains a chronicle of Christian events, contributed by the official representatives of the Churches concerned, and information regarding the Government's policy towards its Christian citizens. It also contains items of documentary interest.

CONTENTS

Part I. Chronicle of Events: July-August, 1950.

Christian Visitors.
Pilgrimages.
Holy Year Pilgrims from Israel to Rome.
Centenary of the Scapular of Mount Carmel.
Reopening of the chapel of Notre-Dame in Jerusalem.
Christian Broadcasts over the "Voice of Israel".
German Church Property.
The Maronite Monastery in Jaffa.
Baptist Agricultural Settlement in Israel.
A talk on the common source of Jewish and Catholic Liturgy and Music.

Part II. A New Year's Letter from a German Pastor to his friends in Israel.

PART I. CHRONICLE OF EVENTS

Christian Visitors

On July 3rd, a group consisting of 29 ministers and laymen of the Fellowship of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, whose headquarters are at Springfield, Missouri, U.S.A., arrived in Israel in the Council's private plane, "The Ambassador", landing at Lydda Airport. They had travelled via Cyprus and Jordan. The party visited Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Tiberias, Degania, Nazareth and Haifa, and left from Lydda on July 5th.

On July 4th, Mr *Alfred C. Snead,* Foreign Secretary to the Christian Missionary Alliance, arrived in Israel. He stayed at the headquarters of the Missionary Alliance in Israel, in the American Gospel Church in Jerusalem.

On July 17th, Rev *F. R. Barnes,* Chairman of the Assemblies of God Overseas Mission Council of London, called at the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Mr. Barnes was on a missionary tour of Israel, the Congo and Tanganyika.

On July 20th, the Rev. Archimandrite *Assoghig Ghazarian,* of the St James' Brotherhood of Jerusalem, who had just returned from Harbin in Manchuria, called at the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Rev. Ghazarian had been away for 14 years as the only Armenian priest for the Far East on behalf of the Catholicossat of Etchmiadzin. From 1941 till 1945, he was interned in a Japanese concentration camp in Mukden. He has now returned to Jerusalem, as his community in the Far East is dispersed, some members having gone to Europe, America and the Philippines, and others home to Armenia.

On July 21st, H. E. Mgr. *Carlo Maria de la Torre,* Archbishop of Quito, Ecuador, and Snr. *Alfonso Francisco Ramirez,* Member of the Mexican Supreme Court, arrived in Israel for a week's visit as the guests of the Government. During their stay they visited the principal towns including Nazareth, a number of communal and smallholders' settlements, Government Departments and scientific Institutions, and attended a session of the Supreme Court, where they were officially received. At a farewell meeting arranged by the Foreign Ministry, Mgr. de la Torre recalled the help extended by the Church to the Jews during the Second World War and concluded: "I pray that God may help you to carry out your great plans".

On July 24th, Revs. *Theodore Jackman* and *Paul Parkes Walenta,* of the First Presbyterian Church in New Hartford, N. Y., called at the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

On July 26th, Mr. *Mark A. McCloskey,* Director of the Community Education Department of New York, visited Mount Zion.

On July 27th, Mr. *Eamonn de Valera,* the fomer Prime Minister of Eire, accompanied by his two sons Major *Vivion de Valera* and Dr *Eamonn de Valera,* arrived in Israel as a Holy Year pilgrim. The party visited the Holy Places in Galilee, Ain Karem and Jerusalem. On Friday evening, July 28th, they dined with Chief Rabbi and Mrs. Herzog, Mr. Ben Gurion, the Prime Minister, being also present. On July 30th, they crossed into the Old City, whence they returned on August 1st, leaving Israel next morning.

On August 11th, Prince *Rufo Ruffo della Scaletta* and Count *Carlo Rocca Nasalli,* Representatives of the Sovereign Order of Malta, left Israel for Rome after a stay of several days in New Jerusalem and in the Old City, where they investigated the possibility of reopening the Italian Hospital and other institutions, which had been taken over by the British Authorities when Italy entered World War II.

Pilgrimages

Recent arrivals of pilgrim groups in Israel included the following:

On July 6th, a group of 35, from Argentine, Bolivia and the United States. They crossed to the Old City on July 9th.

On July 18th, a group of 25, including 16 priests, from the United States, Canada, San Domingo, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico and Italy.

On July 26th, a group of 36 men and women from Italy, led by H.E. Mgr. *Giuseppe Niccolini,* Bishop of Assisi. This was the first group of Holy Year pilgrims to come by boat. They re-embarked at Beirut, travelling back to the coast from Bethlehem via Jordan, Syria and the Lebanon.

On August 4th, a group of 28, who flew direct from Rome to Mafrak in Jordan, and crossed into Israel from the Old City.

On August 22nd, a group of 28, from Canada, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Venezuela, U.S.A., Italy and Portugal. The party was led by Father *Candido Felicolo* on behalf of the Custodial Delegation in Rome and included H. E. Mgr. *Antonio Zattera,* Bishop of Caxias, Brazil.

Holy Year Pilgrims from Israel to Rome.

On August 16th, a group of some 45 Holy Year pilgrims from Israel, among them notables of the Christian Arab communities of Jaffa, Haifa, Nazareth and elsewhere, led by Mgr. A. Vergani, Patriarchal Representative in Israel, left for Rome on a sixteen days' pilgrimage. The party was seen off by Dr. P. Colbi,Assistant Director of the Department for Christian Communities.

Seventh Centenary of the Scapular of Mount Carmel

On July 16th, the feast of the Sanctuary of Mount Carmel, celebrations took place to commemorate the seventh centenary of the Apparition of the Virgin, in 1250, to Blessed Simon Stock, sixth Superior General of the Carmelites, when he received the Scapular of Mount Carmel. The community of the Franciscan Fathers of Nazareth, with their *schola,* sang a solemn Mass which was transmitted by the Israel Radio, and the Rev. Father Denis Hanna, O.C.D., Latin Curate of Haifa, delivered the Sermon. In the afternoon, a procession led by Mgr. Vergani took place on Mount Carmel, in which many religious communities and institutions took part.

By the middle of August, the Very Rev. Father Germano, O.C.D., Superior of Mt. Carmel, left for Rome to attend a conference of all Superiors of the Carmelite Monasteries. The Carmelite Order has decided to devote the whole year ending July 1951 to commemorative celebrations of the Institution of the Scapular, and the conference in Rome is to work out a programme. It will probably be decided to include special pilgrimages to Mt. Carmel, which would thus become the focal point of the celebrations.

Reopening of the chapel of Notre Dame in Jerusalem

The first service in the chapel of Notre Dame de France in Jerusalem for more than two years was held on August 15, on the occasion of the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. The last service had been held on June 16, 1948.

The chapel, situated in the fighting area two years ago, was damaged during the war and has recently been repaired, with funds contributed in equal portions by the French and the Israel Governments.

After the reconciliation of the chapel by the Superior, the Rev. Father L. Brunet, A. A., a pontifical High Mass was celebrated by the Rev. Father Anselme, Abbot of the French Benedictine Convent on the Mount of Olives, who had crossed from the Old City.

Among those in attendance, besides members of all religious orders in the Israel part of Jerusalem and of the French colony, were the French Consul-General, M. René Neuville, Captain de Jouffrault, of the U.N., the Rev. Father Terence Kuehn, Patriarchal Vicar for Southern

Israel, and Dr. M. Mendes, of the Christian Department of the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

The Notre Dame chapel was repaired under the supervision of Father Brunet, who is a civil engineer by profession, and who was sent from France two years ago as superior of the Notre Dame Hospice. The repairs were carried out by skilled Jewish workmen, assisted by Arabs. During the last weeks some young French Catholic students, who were spending a working holiday in Israel, assisted in electrical and carpentry work.

Father Brunet said that the restoration of the famous mural paintings on linen by Flandrin had been carried out by two Jewish painters in Jerusalem in such an expert way that it was impossible to see where they had been damaged.

The chapel of Notre Dame will from now on be open for regular services.

Christian Broadcasts Over "The Voice of Israel"

The first Protestant devotional service over "The Voice of Israel" was broadcast on Sunday, August 6, at 3.15 p.m. Israel time. Those taking part were the Revs. L. F. Irish, American Gospel Church; Canon H. A. Jones, Church Mission to the Jews; R. L. Lindsey, Jerusalem Baptist Congregation; William L. Hull, Zion Christian Mission; and A. Scott Morrison, St. Andrew's Church.

The programmes are scheduled for the second Sunday of every month. They will be mainly in English, but will contain a Scripture reading in Hebrew and in Arabic.

It will be recalled that on June 11th, the same five clergymen protested against the refusal of the Israel Broadcasting Service to permit the Hebrew portion of a scheduled Protestant religious service to be broadcast on that day. (See "Christian News from Israel", No. 7).

In the course of a reply on behalf of the Government Mr. G. Agron, Director of the Information Services, said that "there was no departure from the principle of religious liberty guaranteed by Israel to all denominations. The fact that all Communities, Christian and Moslem, have been invited to make use of the Government broadcasting service is in itself evidence of our desire that adherents of all faiths, and their institutions, should enjoy every reasonable facility for the exercise of their religious functions". The Protestant communities in Israel, the letter continued, are free to use the Hebrew language in their religious services over the "Voice of Israel," although it should be clear that "the exercise of the religious functions of one denomination ought not to be of a nature that is likely to give rise to offence to adherents of another denomination".

Roman Catholic Services are broadcast on "The Voice of Israel" on the third Sunday of each month, at 3.15 p.m., Israel time. The first of these was on June 18th, from the parish church in Haifa. After an introduction by Mgr. Vergani, the benediction of the Holy Sacrament was recited with accompaniment by the parish choir under Father Boulos Karam; and this was followed by religious news. The second broadcast was on July 16th, on the occasion of the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

German Chuch Property

Mr. Charles Lutz visited Israel in July on behalf of the Lutheran World Federation as a special delegate for Orphaned Missions in the Holy Land. Mr. Lutz, who, as Swiss Consul in Budapest during the Second World War, helped to save tens of thousands of Jewish lives, and who, before 1939, was Swiss Vice-Consul in Jaffa and Tel Aviv, came to Israel for discussions with the Governments of Israel and of Jordan on the transfer of German Lutheran property to the Lutheran World Federation. On the eve of his departure on July 26 a reception was held in his honour by Knesseth Member M. D. Levinstein, formerly of Switzerland, at the house of Mr. Von Freudiger, the former head of the Orthodox Jewish Community in Budapest. The reception was attended by Cabinet Ministers, Knesseth Members, the President of the Supreme Court, and prominent members of the Swiss and Hungarian Jewish communities in Israel. Mr. Lutz intends to return to continue his negotiations next month. It will be recalled that Professor F. Nolde and Dr. Max Habicht visited Israel previously on behalf of the Lutheran World Federation in connection with the transfer of German Church property to the Federation.

On July 26th last the Israeli Parliament enacted a law authorising the Government to collect and liquidate German property in Israel. The property is to be used as security for compensation due to Israelis in respect of claims against the German State and German associations or nationals. The law affects the property of all persons who were German subjects after January 30, 1933, except those who were persecuted under Nazi racial measures and persons who became German subjects through conquest.

Another clause empowers the Minister of Finance in his discretion to withdraw from the jurisdiction of the Administrator of German Property places of worship or property of German ecclesiastical, religious, cultural, educational, charitable or benevolent organizations. The Chairman of the Finance Committee explained that, in the case of places of worship, these would be handed over to religious bodies, other than German, belonging to the same religious denomination.

The Maronite Monastery in Jaffa

During the 1948 fighting, the parish priest of the Maronite Monastery in Jaffa left for the Lebanon, and early in 1949 six families moved into the Monastery. Recently, the priest returned to Israel; and at the instance of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, who wished to return the Monastery to him, the Custodian of Abandoned Property issued an eviction order against the families. The latter appealed to the District Court, pleading that they had signed a contract with a Greek-Catholic Father, who held a power of attorney to act on behalf of the Monastery, and that they had paid him rent which he forwarded to the Lebanon. The Custodian contended that the Monastery was abandoned property and that no third party could dispose of it; the appellants disputed this, claiming that it belonged to the Catholic Church of which the Maronite Church formed a part.

The Court decided that, according to Catholic Canon Law, the Greek-Catholic Father in the present case was authorised to act for the Maronite

sect, and that therefore the contract, which in fact was later approved by the Custodian's office, was valid.

Baptist agricultural settlement in Israel

Preparations are under way for establishing a Baptist agricultural settlement in Israel, near Petah Tikvah, northeast of Tel Aviv. This will be the first Christian agricultural settlement to be established since the foundation of the State of Israel. The Rev. R. L. Lindsey will head the settlement, which will contain a Bible School where the language of instruction will be Hebrew. During the first stage some 50 persons will settle there. A portion of the funds required has already been received from the Baptists of the southern part of the United States. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Francis are shortly due from the United States to assist in the direction of the settlement. Among the settlers are a number of Jews who were already members of Baptist Congregations in Europe. Most of the settlers speak Hebrew. An advance party is preparing the soil.

A talk on the common source of Jewish and Catholic Liturgy and Music

The discoveries of Dr. Eric Werner, a leading American musicologist, composer and teacher, on the common source of Jewish and Catholic Liturgy and Music, formed the subject of a talk recently given in Jerusalem. Dr. Werner, who is Professor of Jewish Music at the Hebrew Union College of New York and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Hebrew Union School of Sacred Music in New York, maintains that the common source of Jewish and Catholic liturgical music can be traced to the Temple in Jerusalem. Studying Jewish religious music in France, Ireland, Germany, Italy, Greece, Armenia, Palestine, Egypt, Syria and Mesopotamia as well as the liturgies of the Roman Catholic, Old Irish, North African (Latin), Jacobite, Maronite, Nestorian, Coptic, Armenian and Byzantine Churches, Dr. Werner discovered that:

(1) Two Jewish Levitical singers from Jerusalem, Christian proselytes who had been brought to Rome by Pope Damasus I in the fourth century, transmitted the Jewish musical and liturgical tradition directly to the Roman Church. They are identified on burial markers in the Catacombs in Rome.

(2) The origin of eight church tones can be traced to Jewish and, still further back, to ancient Hittite inspiration.

(3) Almost all the psalm tones of the Roman and Armenian Churches can be found in chants of the Yemenite and Babylonian Jews who have not had any contact with the Church or the rest of world Jewry during the historical period.

(4) All the archaic strata of the Gregorian Chant are based on Jewish sources and modes.

(5) The text of the famous church hymn, "Dies Irae," which is a part of every Requiem, had its origin in Byzantine Palestine.

(6) Hebraisms occur in early Christian liturgies, especially in the liturgy of the Armenian Church.

Dr. Werner recently delivered an address on "The Interdependence of Synagogue, Byzantine and Gregorian Chant" before the International Congress of Catholic Music, which was held in May and June 1950, at the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in Rome.

PART II

A NEW YEAR'S LETTER FROM A GERMAN PASTOR TO HIS FRIENDS IN ISRAEL.

My dear Friends,

From the depths of my heart I send to you and to all Israel my warmest wishes for Rosh Hashanah (1).

I know that Israel enters the new year of 5711 through a great darkling gate.

First and foremost, this gate is the *profound earnestness of Israel,* which at this season places itself under the eye of God Almighty, and in His light examines its deeds and thoughts. It is, indeed, a tremendous thing when, to the call of the *Shofar* (2), the congregation prays: "Today is the birthday of the world. Today the world, and all the creatures of the world, await judgment. God have mercy upon us". It is a great moment, when Israel calls to the "Rock of Israel" and bows the knee before Him; a great moment when, before the open Ark of the Law, the prayer "*Avinu Malkenu* (our Father, our King)" is uttered: "Happy is the people which knows the joyful clarion: Lord, we shall walk in the light of Thy countenance".

Next, this darkling gate in the *deep grief of Israel,* the *Kaddish* (3) for those who are no longer on earth to share in the observance of these Holy Days, those who in the dread years, amidst fearful anguish and torture, suffered death, murder and extermination, those whose lives were extinguished at the brutal hands of monsters. Their numbers are great beyond all telling; the memory of their martyrdom brings horror and agony beyond all measure. In ever renewed grief, crushed and stricken, I bow my head and hide my face, for that I belong to the people who inflicted this hideous hurt upon Israel; and I mourn with Israel for those struck down.

Their mouth speaks no more on earth: but their blood cries out aloud in harrowing tones. As the *selikhoth* (4) of the New Year days recall those who, a thousand years ago, perished in the persecutions of the Middle Ages, so are new lamentations chanted for the millions who perished in our own days.

With the mind's eye I see the massive figure, hewn from the rock, that stands in Mishmar ha-Emek. Not far from that spot, on the hills of Gilboa, King David sang his imperishable elegy. Here is Mother Israel, and to her a sinking figure clings. She bends to him, but she cannot reach him: she cannot save him. He sinks before her eyes and she cries despairingly: "Help! Help!" It is the memorial for the dead of the Warsaw Ghetto. Their pain and torture none can depict, for hardly one escaped. Only the stars were witnesses. But no! The heart of the everlasting God knows it all.

---

1) The Jewish New Year's Day. A most solemn and holy feast.

2) The ram's horn, ceremonially sounded on New Year's Day.

3) The Prayer recited in memory of the dead.

4) Penitential prayers recited during the period of Atonement preceding and following the New Year.

Can a loving word console, when so vast a flood of evil has engulfed so much beloved life? What if word of mine brings only grief to wounded hearts? And so I will not cease to call for repentance, and to entreat that my people too and all peoples shall hearken to the voice of the *Shofar* that sounds over the people of God, that, with no attempt at self-excuse, they shall submit themselves to God's judgment, and cry to Heaven "God be merciful to me a sinner". Only then may they try, so far as in their power lies, to make good what can never be made good.

But lastly the great gate to the new year is the *Hope of Israel,* which sanctifies and illumines the Holy Days. God has called His people home. Israel is coming home. True, in these days, no less than in past years, a mass of weighty problems and immense tasks assuredly confronts the young State. But God leads His people by the hand, and with His aid all assaults and dangers will be overcome.

It was vouchsafed to me, in the year now approaching its end, to hearken to the footsteps of God in Israel, and to interpret what I saw in the light of the Promise. I see before my eyes the wonders that came to pass, that come to pass daily, in Galilee and the Negev, on the Carmel and in the Sharon, in the villages and settlements and in the towns, in the desert and in the sown. I see those who for decades have been building this Holy Land, the watchmen, who year by year stood faithful to their trust, and those who gave their lives — their graves speak with compelling voice. I see the great men of the land and the sages of the people, the old and the young. And more than all I see the lovely sweet children, the flowers of God in the Holy Land.

And so I can but pray in the words of the ancient prayer: "May our eyes behold Thy return in mercy to Zion". "Blessed art Thou, o God, who restoreth His *Shekinah* (5) to Zion". "O God, we wait for Thy Salvation, for Thy Anointed". The inscrutable wisdom of the Eternal has spread a veil over the tragic story of Israel. But He will, in His good time, draw it aside, and then shall the tangled skein of Israel's destiny be unravelled and His design made manifest. Then shall those who have waited see the whole and not only the fragments at their feet.

I cannot forget that kindly hands and hearts gave me their blessing in Israel with their "Baruch habbà beshem Adonaï" and with their "Akhinu attà ("Blessed be he who comes in the name of the Lord"; "Thou art our brother"). And so I pray today: "Do Thou inscribe Israel in the Book of Life, for Thy sake; Thou God of Life, Thou King, Helper, Deliverer, Shield, who rememberest the piety of the Fathers and bringest the Redeemer to their sons' sons for His name's sake in love". "Vouchsafe great peace to Israel Thy people for ever, for Thou art the Lord of all peace. May it be Thy will to bless Thy people Israel in all times and in every hour with Thy peace".

May the everlasting and merciful God bless you and your dear ones in the year 5711.

In truest friendship,

Dr. Hermann Maas

---

5) The Divine Presence.

Responsible Editor: Dr. Chaim Wardi